



# NEWS



## News Headlines 12/09/2021

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Ken Brafam, MOUNTAIN NEWS

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SBC Fire Chief Dan Munsey was a special guest and gave an overview of current fire operations and conditions along with a rousing talk on community relationships.

at December 2 Meeting

The Crest Forest and Lake Arrowhead Municipal Advisory Councils met on Thursday, December 2. Jennifer Cusack, Government Affairs Manager from SCE, was first up to answer questions and address concerns about work Edison is doing on the mountain to reduce wildfire risk. Cusack talked about planned outages.

“We schedule these outages in advance,” she explained. “Sometimes we’re able to do the work, and your power didn’t go out. Sometimes red flag warnings, or weather, can cause us to have to cancel an outage.” She cited other examples, such as issues with contractors. “There are a number of other things that can change our planned work, including positive tests for COVID.” Other causes for outages include finding a problem with a pole that requires emergency work and results in an area outage.

“We had some changes in our vegetation management contract for this year and we are continuing to do that work,” Cusack continued. “We did have a slow period in the summer where we didn’t have as much vegetation management on the mountain. We’re trying to get that work done before the weather hits.” She advised that customers with concerns or complaints regarding vegetation management can contact Paul Gibson at (951) 235-5030 or email [paul.gibson@sce.com](mailto:paul.gibson@sce.com).

“You guys are a resilient community, and we love to serve you.” A question was asked regarding the availability of warming centers for those customers experiencing a prolonged outage that might have families or be vulnerable to the impending cold temperatures. Cusack answered, “We could explore that with the county. We don’t operate any warming centers. The power could out for an extended period of time. Make sure you have alternate heat sources. Make sure you have a plan. Have a generator and have a way to keep yourself warm.”

Comments or concerns can be directed to Cusack at [jennifer.cusack@sce.com](mailto:jennifer.cusack@sce.com). “I’m happy to field any specific concerns you may have, and thank you for your patience with us as we do this work.”

**San Bernardino County Fire** Chief Dan Munsey took the podium and expressed his concern over present weather trends. “As we look at this weather pattern right now there are very, very dry fuels along with very windy Santa Ana conditions,” he explained.

“When it’s a beautiful 75 degrees up here, it worries me. To compound that worry, around this time of year, some of our fire resources, we don’t keep them deployed year-round.” Munsey talked about how crews are rotated. “I’m working right now with the CEO to make sure we have the crews to fight fires when they start.”

Munsey addressed community involvement. “Those of you who have lived through some of our fires realize that we have to partner with our community. And there are some great partners up here. We need you to do your part. We need you to go to our website and I want you to look at how to prepare your house to be fire safe. I need you to talk to your neighbors and have a crucial conversation, asking them to clean their property because it’s affecting your house.”

Next Munsey talked about what he calls the ‘Three Cs.’ “They’re very important to me in firefighting. The first is to be very active in the community. That’s why I’m online, that’s why I come up to these meetings. I don’t want you to see a stranger up here. I want to have a relationship. Just like I know you have a relationship with your firefighters that do such a great job up here.” He

encouraged anyone that knows of an event that they would like to see fire personnel visit to call his office or walk into any fire station and let them know.

“The second C is communication. Communication, obviously, needs to come from me to you. That’s why I’m here, that’s why I travel around the county, to make sure we’re talking about the issues facing us. But I also need to have communication from you. Tell me what your needs are. Fire service exists for one reason, and that’s for you. The final C is collaboration. Our relationships with the Sheriff’s Department, CAL FIRE and local police departments have never been stronger.”

The Chief finished his report on a troubling note. “Across the nation we have a big problem in the fire service. For the first time in my career nobody wants to be a firefighter. When I first started you could stand in line with 3,000 other men and women for two or three jobs. That’s not the case anymore. Now we’re struggling to hire. We have some guys working 27, 28 days a month. I mean 24-hour shifts. It means a lot, when you see them just give them a friendly wave. And I appreciate you guys’ support.”

The website for **San Bernardino County Fire** is <https://sbcfire.org/>. The office number for Chief Munsey is (909) 387-5779. Lt. Craig Harris from the Twin Peaks Sheriff’s Department began his report talking about the upcoming holidays. “We’re anticipating the rush. Snow Summit and Bear Mountain opened today. Traffic on the east side of the mountain’s going to be picking up. We’re prepared to deal with that especially when snow play starts.” Harris talked about recent preparedness drills involving volunteer forces from all the valley and mountain stations. “We all got together for about four hours to do a tabletop exercise simulating a large-scale fire in the forest. That helps us prepare in dealing with making notifications we need to make, evacuations and people that come back after a fire has occurred. All those plans are in place, and we practice a couple times a year.”

“Staffing-wise at our station we are currently one deputy short,” Harris said. “We’re doing recruiting department-wide. If you think it’s difficult getting firefighters to join the force, you should see what it’s like trying to get police officers. We did have one deputy today finish his field training.” Harris shared some crime news. “Official statistics won’t come out until February or March, but we’re several hundred reports above what we did last year. A lot of that has to do with the pandemic. People were home so there was less burglary and theft. People were protecting their own homes.”

Harris announced the formation of a new group. “We’re in the process of developing a new community workgroup. We’ve modeled ours after a program that our Apple Valley station started a couple months ago. You’ve probably seen this across the nation where police departments are reaching out to communities for input into how we operate. And then there’s questions as to why we do certain things. How we enforce the laws. Why we have to investigate crimes the way we do. We want influential community members from church groups, schools, people that have a pulse on what our communities do up here. And how we can better serve the communities up here. We’ll be putting that together in about a month or so and we’ll be meeting every other month throughout the year. We are reaching out to the communities, and we want to be involved, be productive in your community, and protect you the best way we can.” Lt. Harris encourages those with questions or concerns to call him at the station at (909) 336-0600.

CAL FIRE Battalion Chief Brett Taylor began his report with a breakdown of assets. “Currently CAL FIRE has 17 fire engines, eight hand crews, two dozers, and helicopter capability. I think the most pressing thing is we have a significant reduction coming on December 13. It’s going to essentially close our hand crews that are out of Pilot Rock camp for the winter.” Taylor referred to other crews that would be available if needed. “Likely three of our four engines are going to close down after the new year.” He stated that other engines would be able to respond.

Battalion Chief Bryan Grant from the US Forest Service was next up. “We are shooting for our personnel to stay on through December into January 11.” Grant stated that aircraft resources will remain available. He further stated that forest restrictions remain in place.

Director of Operations Georgia Walker from San Bernardino County Public Works announced some new programs. “We are very excited to announce we do have two sorts of new things. One is a snow website that accessed through our main website, and it’s got a lot of great snow information on there.” The other program is an app called SeeClickFix which enables the user to submit service requests directly to Public Works for things like snow removal, potholes, and so on. Information is available at [www.SBCounty.gov/DPW](http://www.SBCounty.gov/DPW). Walker stated that the department is fully equipped to handle the winter weather when it arrives.

Nathan Godwin is the general manager of the Lake Gregory Community Recreation Company and he started his report with CRUD. “That stands for Clean, Repair, Update and Develop.” Godwin gave a detailed report on the maintenance tasks involving the Lake Gregory park area. This included work on replacing stairs and performing maintenance on the water slides. “We’re also hoping for snow. We want to put in a snow play area and brand that as a safe place to park and play. If I have a parking lot that’s plowed then they can come in and not have to park on the side of the road. We’re doing our part to work towards a solution to a problem that’s been plaguing the mountain for a long time.”

Godwin announced that stocking is done for the year. “We’ve had 18,500 pounds of trout stocked this year. There were 11,000 unique fishermen, women and children that came to the lake. We’re bringing people from hours away. People catch fish here.” A question was asked regarding the amount of money invested in stocking this year. “We were right around \$8,000 this year. It may not be quite as high every year, but it had been so long since any fish had really been put into the lake in any sort of effort.” Continuing his update on fish, he continued, “I also want to bring some other species back. We have a healthy bass population that some people know about, some people don’t. We don’t have enough bluegill. Bluegill are a feeder fish, everything eats bluegill. I also want to bring catfish back to Lake Gregory. I love catfish better than trout. They’re more fun to catch, they’re better eating. Historian Russ Keller has a photo of a 25-pound catfish caught in Lake Gregory in the 70s.”

“My most exciting update for tonight is that we are expecting to break ground in two weeks on the new dog park over here in the San Moritz area. It’s expected to take only two weeks for that dog park to be open for use. We’re not closing the original dog park. We’re going to keep both open.” He went on, “That is the first step in this whole restoration phase that includes the field. By next summer we will have grass on the field. It’s been dirt for too long.” He added that they’re in the application stage for a grant under Prop 68 that he hopes will allow them to improve the lighting around the park and update some other features.

Jenny Hueter is the general manager for the Rim of the World Recreation and Park District. Hueter shared her excitement over the youth basketball program. “We have 160 kids that are registered for youth basketball, which is huge. We are looking for coaches and referees. It is a huge undertaking. I’m so proud of the staff. The games will begin in January.” Hueter announced a special event. “Next Saturday, the 11th, we’re having a toy drive and Christmas tree giveaway. We thought, ‘You know, it would be nice for families to pick up toys for their children, but wouldn’t it be great if they could take a small Christmas tree home, too.’ So, if you are willing to donate a small Christmas tree you can drop it off at our office. I think it’s going to be a very special event and it’s at the Twin Peaks Community Center from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.”

Marilyn Mays is vice-president of the Rim of the World Educational Foundation. “Rim of the World Educational Foundation has been in existence here since 1983 supporting all our USD schools. We support the Avid Program at the middle schools and high school. We support ROP and we support a school grants partnership program for every school in the district. It’s important work, it’s important funds that we raise for programs to support educational endeavors at schools.”

Mays added that she’s also vice-president on the board of the Rim of the World Historical Society and she gave a year-end update on operations at the museum, and shared that the museum will be open for a holiday open house on December 11 and 12 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Lewis Murray is district representative for Supervisor Janice Rutherford. He addressed the current redistricting process that is being discussed on December 7 by the Board of Supervisors. He explained how redistricting is required to occur every ten years to balance the population for representation, and how it involves a lot of moving of district boundaries. “We’re looking at the current plan, which was approved by the supervisors, that’s on the agenda for their next meeting on Tuesday. It will move the Rim of the World communities out of Supervisor Rutherford’s district into Supervisor Rowe’s district. So, these lines are going to shift. We’re going to see a change in supervisors. Currently they’re still working on a plan to have her cover this area for the last year of her term but that hasn’t been decided yet. Assuming they approve the map on Tuesday it will become law 30 days after that.”

Murray revisited the subject of the so-called ‘Dark Skies Ordinance.’ “A very brief explanation of it is, if you live in a rural area probably most of us enjoy looking at the stars in the evening, and you’ve got neighbors with bright lights and this sort of thing. It primarily requires people to have light fixtures that shine the light down, that are shielded, and all light should be coming out below the horizontal plane.” He added, “It still allows for security lights, safety lights, and that sort of thing. It will be difficult to enforce but over time it will get better and better.”

This paper will report on the outcome of the Board of Supervisors meeting on September 7 and the decision made regarding redistricting.

<https://mountain-news.com/news/40952/mac-members-cover-a-lot-of-ground/>